

THE MATADOR WMA NEWS

WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT IN THE ROLLING PLAINS

Hello Everyone! Welcome to the Matador Wildlife Management Area.

We hope you enjoy your stay and that you find some items of interest in this newsletter. Our newsletter will come out in the fall of each year prior to hunting season. There have been some changes in our Public Hunts for the 2014-2015 season. Look for various wildlife management issues, research updates, harvest records and hunting season dates, survey/census results, and other activities at the Matador WMA in future newsletters. Also follow us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Matador-Wildlife-Management-Area-Texas-Parks-and-Wildlife/151388758352765>. Have a great fall and winter and thank you for visiting the Matador WMA. ***Matthew Poole***

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**TEXAS
PARKS &
WILDLIFE**

A Look Back at Last Season and a Look Forward to the 2014-15 Season by Chip Ruthven

The 2013-14 quail season had a slight uptick over 2012-13 numbers but was still extremely poor. Our persistent drought continued with only a little over 18 inches of rainfall in 2013. However, we did have a much better growing season in 2013 than we did the previous two years. With all this gloom and doom we did have a few bright spots this past hunting season. With our pumping of water at windmill sites during the drought, dove hunters fared well hunting over water with about 6 birds harvested per hunter day. Our buck hunters harvested 4 white-tailed deer qualifying for the Texas Big Game Awards, with one buck being the highest scoring white-tail harvested on the WMA in over 10 years with a gross B&C score of 163 5/8. We also had a tremendous 8-point buck scoring 150 3/8 gross B&C, which topped the scales at 184 pounds field dressed. It was the heaviest white-tail buck to come

off the Matador WMA since deer hunting began on the WMA in 1989.

We started out 2014 with well below average precipitation and it looked like our ongoing drought

was just not going to “give up its ghost”. However, we received above normal rainfall from late May through mid-July. Despite overall rainfall for the year being below normal, our range conditions, as of late -August, are the best they have been in four years. Although a long process, those areas that burned during the wildfires of 2011 continue to recover nicely. Quail repro-



White tailed buck harvested on the Matador WMA during the 2013-14 season; 163 5/8 Gross

duction is up and early surveys suggest we may have quail numbers near levels observed in 2010. Although quail numbers are far from desired, 1 to 2 more years of favorable precipitation may put quail on a good rebound. Turkey reproduction also looks good. Deer appear to be in good shape, fawn crops are up, and antler production looks average to slightly above average. We are again hoping for one of our best overall hunting seasons in several years.

We continued our habitat enhancement activities in 2014 including the spraying of over 270 acres of mesquite throughout the WMA, aeration of approximately 200 acres, and grubbing of 100 acres. Much of these habitat management efforts have been supported by hunter's purchase of Upland and Migratory Game Bird Stamps, as well as donations from conservation organizations such as the National Wild Turkey Foundation and the Mule Deer Foundation. These management activities are designed to reduce woody plant cover and enhance herbaceous vegetation.

Managing the entire ecosystem is our goal at the Matador WMA and we will continue to use tools such as prescribed fire, rotational livestock grazing, and chemical and mechanical treatments to enhance the plant and wildlife resources on the Matador WMA.



White tailed buck harvested on the Matador WMA during the 2012- 13 season; 150 3/8 Gross

We hope you have a positive outdoor experience on the Matador WMA, and please remember to Hunt Safe and Hunt Responsibly.

MATADOR WMA RAINFALL RECORD (INCHES)

YEAR	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	TOTAL
2008	0.01	0.34	0.44	1.73	3.68	1.71	1.90	2.45	5.10	4.47	0.06	0.00	21.89
2009	0.13	0.35	0.47	3.32	0.90	3.18	3.71	1.14	3.61	1.48	0.22	0.86	19.37
2010	1.49	1.72	1.04	6.77	3.19	2.33	6.75	1.63	1.91	2.00	0.82	0.02	29.67
2011	0.06	0.76	0.11	0.13	1.45	0.34	0.40	0.38	1.08	3.24	1.09	0.94	9.98
2012	0.05	0.73	2.13	0.50	0.77	1.86	1.58	4.56	3.68	0.16	0.25	0.42	16.69
2013	1.65	2.06	0.05	2.15	0.25	3.86	1.72	2.61	0.82	0.14	1.22	1.82	18.35
2014	0.00	0.48	0.73	0.33	4.10	2.91	2.92	2.85					14.32
Average	0.69	0.89	1.18	1.98	3.43	3.11	1.88	2.31	2.50	2.30	1.00	0.93	22.21
**Average Accumulations	0.69	1.59	2.76	4.74	8.17	11.28	13.16	15.47	17.97	20.27	21.27	22.21	

* Monthly Averages (1914 to present) ** Average Accumulations (1914 to present)

2014 Rainfall year-to-date (Jan-August) = 14.32 inches (1.15 inches below cumulative year-to-date average 15.47 inches)

TAYLOR LAKES UPDATE

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department maintains a 525 acre Unit of the Playa Lakes Wildlife Management Area just west of Lelia Lake, Texas in Donley County. It features 4 perched water table lakes and 2 moist soil units, as well as reseeded tallgrass prairie and native mixed-grass prairie. Because the current depth of the water table is low, we pump water into these lakes using an irrigation well and a network of pipelines. Waterfowl use this area annually during winter and migration. The unit also has a healthy white-tailed deer population and several coveys of Northern Bobwhite were spotted this summer suggesting they are responding favorably to improving range conditions as a result of increased rainfall and conservative rotational grazing practices employed on the area. Observations of wild turkey on the WMA are also increasing.

Recently, several habitat management treatments have taken place on the Taylor Lakes Unit. This past summer Texas Parks and Wildlife and the National Wild Turkey Federation teamed together to fund a multi-faceted project which included the removal of an old dilapidated cross fence to better facilitate grazing management, dredging of Cattail Lake, and herbicide treatment of 100 acres of honey mesquite in the uplands in order to improve prairie characteristics of the native mixed-grass prairie. Individual plant treatment (IPT) of Siberian elm and honey mesquite were also conducted this summer in efforts to maintain reseeded tallgrass prairie sites.

Future plans for the Taylor Lakes Unit include continuation of dove, early teal, archery feral hog, archery deer, youth deer, and youth/adult waterfowl hunts, continuation of prescribed grazing, continuation of invasive brush control, regular prescribed burning to manage herbaceous plant resources, and periodic flooding of the lakes to attract waterfowl during migration and winter. For more information on the Taylor Lakes Unit, please contact Matthew Poole at 806-492-3405.



TPWD Biologist Kara Campbell views a recently dredged area of Cattail Lake.



Moist Soil unit #2 after dredging and flooding. This unit will provide habitat for wintering waterfowl.

HUNT TYPE	PERMIT TYPE	HUNT DATES
Dove	APH	9/1/14-10/20/14
Waterfowl (early teal)	APH	Each day of established early teal season, except during special hunt periods
Archery Deer	APH	11/7/14-11/11/14, 11/14/14-11/18/14 (Fri.-Tues.)
Youth/Adult Waterfowl	APH - Postcard (OSR)	12/6/14-12/7/14, 12/13/14-12/14/14, 12/20/14-12/21/14, 12/27/14-12/28/14, 1/3/15-1/4/15, 1/10/15-1/11/15, 1/17/15-1/18/15, 1/24/15-1/25/15 provided these dates fall within dates established for the High Plains Mallard Management Unit (Sat.-Sun.)
Youth Only Deer Either Sex	APH - Postcard (OSR)	11/28/14-11/30/14 (Fri.-Sun.)
Youth Only Deer Antlerless	APH - Postcard (OSR)	12/29/14-12/31/14 (Mon.-Wed.)
Archery Feral Hog	APH	2/1/15-8/31/15

2014-2015 MATADOR WMA PUBLIC HUNTS

HUNT TYPE	PERMIT TYPE	HUNT DATES
Dove	APH	9/1/14-9/26/14, 10/2/14-10/5/14, 10/9/14-10/17/14, 12/20/14-12/26/14, 1/1/15-1/7/15
Quail	APH	10/25/14-11/2/14, 11/18/14-12/9/14, 12/20/14-12/26/14, 1/1/15-2/1/15
Waterfowl (early teal)	APH	Each day of season except when area is closed to hunting.
Youth/Adult Dove and Quail	APH	10/18/14-10/19/14 (Sat.-Sun.)
ADE – Archery Deer	Special	9/27/14-10/1/14 (Sat.-Wed.)
AMD - Archery Mule Deer	Special	10/20/14-10/24/14 (Mon.-Fri.)
GMD - Gun Mule Deer	Special	12/15/14-12/19/14 (Mon.-Fri.)
GDE – Gun Deer Either Sex	Special	11/3/14-11/7/14 (Mon.-Fri.), 11/8/14-11/12/14 (Sat.-Wed.)
GDA – Gun Deer Antlerless	Special	11/13/14-11/17/14 (Thu.-Mon.), 12/10/14-12/14/14 (Wed.-Sun.); 12/27/14-12/31/14 (Sat.-Wed.)
Archery Feral Hog	APH	3/9/15-3/22/15
GFH – Gun Feral Hog	Special	3/27/15-3/29/15 (Fri.-Sun.)
YFH – Youth Feral Hog	Special	3/7/15-3/8/15 (Sat.-Sun.)
GTS – Spring Turkey	Special	4/10/15-4/12/15, 4/17/15-4/19/15 (Fri.-Sun.)
YTS – Youth Spring Turkey	Special	4/25/15-4/26/15 (Sat.-Sun.)
Fishing	APH or LUP	Year round except during Special Permit hunts.

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) offers a variety of hunting opportunities through two public hunting systems. The \$48 Annual Public Hunting Permit (APH) provides nearly year-round hunting on approximately 1.2 million acres of land. The Public Hunt Drawing System Permit (Special) provides opportunities to apply for a wide variety of supervised, drawn hunts including special drawings for both adults and youth hunters. In addition, TPWD offers special hunt package drawings for exotic wildlife and quality native animals on TPWD managed lands as well as specially leased private properties.

DEER, DEER, DEER! by Kara Campbell, Texas Parks & Wildlife Department

As urban sprawl continues to increase throughout the United States so does human-wildlife conflicts. At the end of the 20th century, 75% of homes were in metropolitan areas and almost half of the United States population lived in suburban communities. Texas is no exception. Between the 2010 and 2013 census the overall Texas population jumped 1.3 million and was reported to have 8 of the 15 fastest growing cities in 2012. White tailed deer are one the most widespread and abundant species of large mammals in North America and due to continued urban development they have become a wildlife management problem in many places throughout the United States, including Texas. Deer populations are estimated to be around 30 million in North America and around 3.3 million in Texas alone. Deer have quickly adapted to urban environments and have become accustomed to human activity due to abundant food, absence of predators, and lack of hunting pressure, leading to conflicts with residents and populations judged as overabundant. Many urban and suburban communities need ways to manage overabundant deer populations and it is often asked how many deer should an area have? The number of deer appropriate for an area depends on the tolerance level of residents. People of the state own the deer and therefore it is up to cities to determine specific management goals of how many deer should be within the community. Some urban communities have started to develop deer management programs to combat overabundant populations. Working with Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, cities work with urban wildlife biologist to develop a management plan. Currently some cities have decided to develop trap, transport, and pro-



Photo courtesy of Kara Campbell TPWD Biologist.

cess (TTP) programs. This strategy is when deer are trapped within a city, transported to a processing facility where the meat is donated to shelters. Other alternative methods some communities are looking into are surgical sterilization or immunocontraception. Both of these methods are non-lethal and prevent females from reproducing, however they can be costly. Some communities find these strategies appealing because they are non-lethal unlike TTP or sharpshooting. However, TPWD would need to issue a permit for these types of management strategies, which to date has not occurred in Texas. There is not one simple plan that will work for every urban community when it comes to deer management. Therefore each community must determine their objectives and develop a management plan that will best reach their goals.



Texas' Wildlife Crime-Stoppers Program

You can make a difference by reporting poaching, pollution and dumping, arson in state parks and wildlife management areas, and intoxicated boaters. Up to \$1000 may be paid for information leading to arrest and conviction of a person for a violation of our state's wildlife and fisheries laws, as well as for certain laws related to environmental crime, and intoxicated boaters.

Reward Hotline (800) -792-GAME

DIMMITT UNIT UPDATE

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department maintains a 422 acre Unit of the Playa Lakes Wildlife Management Area just west of Dimmitt, Texas in Castro County. It features a reseeded short/midgrass prairie and a playa lake basin. During years of good rainfall the playa lake will hold water. During drier years, the lake can be filled using an irrigation well and pipeline. Sandhill cranes and a variety of waterfowl use this area during migration. It is also a local stronghold for ring-necked pheasant. Pheasant hunts by postcard lottery are held on certain weekends every December.

Adequate rainfall this summer has kept the playa full throughout the growing season providing adequate foraging and nesting habitat for shorebirds and waterfowl and will provide habitat for overwintering waterfowl.

Future plans for the Dimmitt Unit include continuation of post card drawn pheasant and waterfowl hunts, initiation of prescribed grazing, management of kochia (an introduced invasive weed), regular prescribed burning to manage herbaceous plant resources, and periodic flooding of the playa to attract waterfowl during migration and provide overwintering habitat. Information on hunts and hunt dates see table below. For more information on the Dimmitt Unit, please contact Kara Campbell at 806-492-3405.



Playas provide habitat for numerous species of shorebirds.



Pink smartweed is a common forb found in playas and provides food and cover for many species of birds, especially wintering waterfowl.

HUNT TYPE	PERMIT TYPE	HUNT DATES
Pheasant/ Waterfowl	APH-Postcard	12/06/14-12/07/14, 12/20/14-12/21/14 (Sat.-Sun.)
Waterfowl	APH-Postcard	1/3/15-1/4/15, 1/10/15-1/11/15, 1/17/15-1/18/15, 1/24/15-1/25/15 (Sat.-Sun.)

LOCAL BUSINESS DIRECTORY

Lodging and R.V's

Brooks R.V 806-492-3358
Hwy 83 and Goober
Hunter's Lodge 806-492-2167
902 11th St., Paducah (1 blk N of Cracker's)
The Cottle Inn 806-492-3076
1217 Richards, Paducah 806-346-0279
(1 blk N of US70 on 13th St.)
Town House Motel 806-492-3595
1301 Easly, Paducah (US70 W)

Restaurants

Double G's 806-492-3171
1112 Easly, Paducah (US70 W)
Dixie Maid 806-492-3460
1618 Easly, Paducah (US70 W)
Nana's Café 806-492-2787
1319 9th Street, Paducah (US83 S)

Meat Processing

A&K Meat Processing
Wellington 806-447-5660
Raggedy Creek Processing
Crowell 940-684-1744
Wild West Meat Processing
Matador 806-470-9995

Grocery Stores

Moore Thriftway 806-492-3616
1113 9th St., Paducah
United Supermarket 940-937-3631
2105 Avenue F NW, Childress

Convenience Stores

Allsup's 806-492-3947
1602 Easly St., Paducah (US70 W)
The Store 806-492-3326
1001 9th St., Paducah (US 83 & US70)

Hunting Supplies

Jones' Sporting Goods 806-492-3373
1406 9th St., Paducah (US83 S)
Wal-Mart 940-937-6166
2801 Avenue F NW, Childress (US287 N)

Veterinary Services

Childress Veterinary Hospital 940-937-2558
109 Industrial Circle, Childress (US287 N)
Critter Care 940-937-6065
406 19th Street NW, Childress (US83 S)

Emergency Services – Dial 911

Sheriff, 806-492-3131
Ambulance, 806-492-2336
Fire Station, 806-492-3131
Pina's Tire & Towing 806-492-2011

Outdoor Responsibilities

R = Rules and Regulations, E = Ethics, S = Sportsmanship, P = Patience and Professionalism, E = Education, C = Conservation, T = Truth

As hunters, we are ultimately responsible for ourselves as individuals. And as individuals, hunters can constantly remind themselves of their responsibilities by following this simple formula—**R-E-S-P-E-C-T**.

Royalty of the Plains by Chip Ruthven, Texas Parks & Wildlife Department

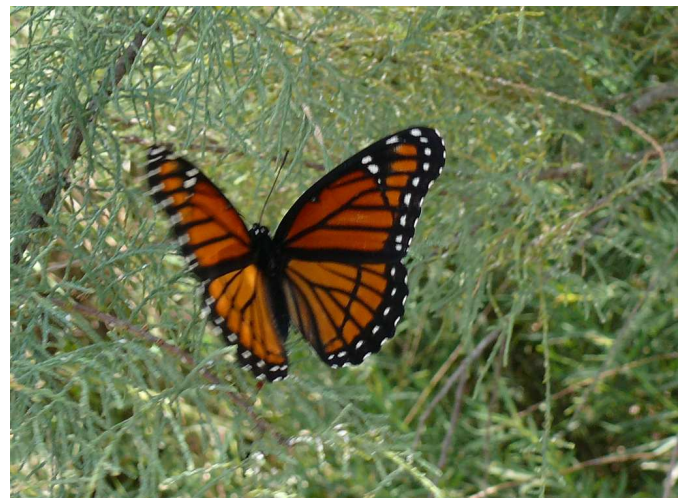
Two species of Milkweed Butterflies can be observed on the Matador WMA and throughout the Rolling Plains. The Monarch (*Danaus plexippus*) is one of the most recognizable butterflies in North America. Monarchs are found throughout much of North America with primary breeding populations in the northern United States and southern Canada. As with most butterflies, adult monarchs typically only live for a few weeks. However, many from the eastern U.S. and Canada that emerge in late summer live for several months and migrate to wintering grounds in central Mexico. Although some Monarchs may summer in the Rolling Plains they are most noticeable during their migrations to and from Mexico. Monarchs begin their fall migration through the Rolling Plains during the late summer with the passing of the season's first cold front. Numbers passing through our area tend to increase behind each cold front through early October. Look for them migrating back through the Rolling Plains in late March and April. For more information on monarchs and their migratory habits visit: <http://www.learner.org/jnorth/monarch/>



The Queen (*Danaus gilippus*) is a summer resident that can be quite common throughout the Rolling Plains. As the Rolling Plains is at the northern limits of the range of the Queen, their populations can vary dramatically from year to year. Queens can be best distinguished from Monarchs

by the background color of their wings, which are a chocolate brown on the Queen and a deep rich orange on the Monarch. In addition to providing nectar to adults via their flowers milkweeds are the primary food source for both Monarch and Queen caterpillars. Adult butterflies can store toxic chemicals from the caterpillar's milkweed host which make them highly unpalatable to most birds that may try to eat them.

The Viceroy (*Limenitis archippus*) is a species of Bushfoot Butterfly that uses mimicry to avoid predation. As the Viceroy is appetizing to many birds and other predators, its color pattern has evolved to look similar to that of the distasteful Monarch.



MAPS Project by Matthew Poole, Texas Parks & Wildlife Department

Every year the Matador WMA participates in a continent-wide project to monitor and evaluate bird populations. The MAPS Project (MAPS = Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship) is conducted throughout the U.S. and Canada, across many different habitats. Under this program, participants agree to trap and band birds on the same site for 5-10 years. Methods are standardized between all participants in the program, thus allowing researchers to combine data taken from similar study sites in the same region. This project provides a huge dataset of records for breeding bird species in North America. By monitoring population trends conservationists can assess potential threats to bird populations and formulate management strategies to ensure healthy populations on non-game birds for future generations.

Birds are captured using mist nets, very fine nylon nets that are practically invisible under low-light conditions, such as early morning when most birds are active. These nets are opened at dawn during 10-day periods from May through August, and checked every 30 minutes for 6 hours. Captured birds are aged, sexed, weighed, a variety of morphological measurements taken, banded, and released. Birds



Male painted bunting with leg band. Males will develop their vibrant adult plumage between 2-3 years of age. Females remain light green in color.

that have been previously caught and banded are recorded also, and this information is especially useful for tracking movement and survival.

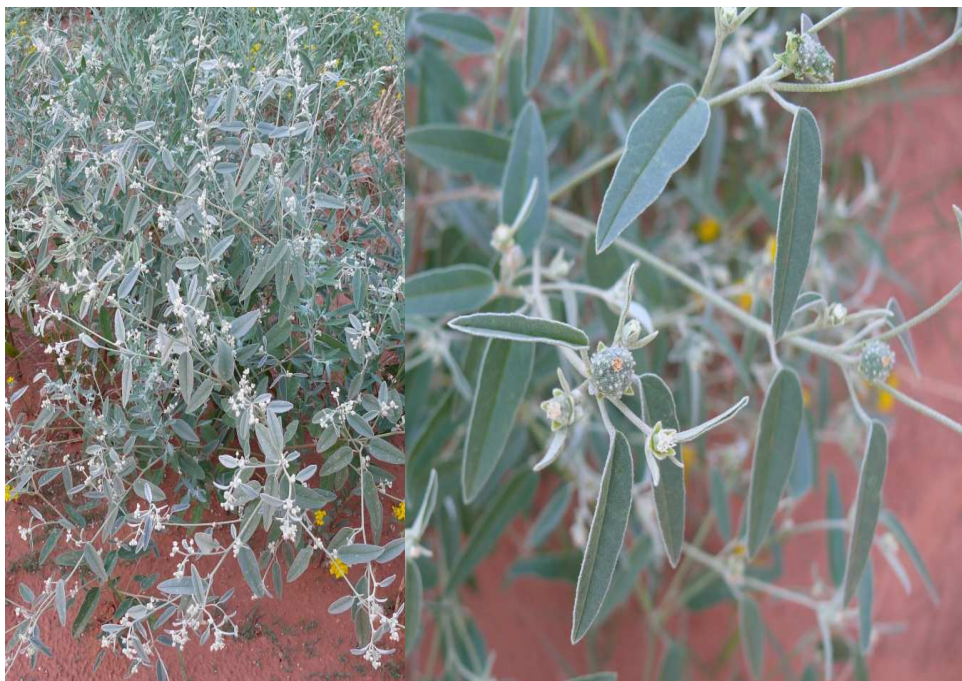
Most of the birds banded under this project are non-game and anyone finding a bird with a band should contact the US Bird Banding Lab at 1-800-327-BAND. Also, dove and waterfowl hunters are encouraged to report bands from birds that they harvest. Instructions for reporting these bands is usually printed on the band or they can contact the Bird Banding Lab.



Northern cardinal being weighed during workup.

Know Your Plants by Chip Ruthven, Texas Parks & Wildlife Department

Texas croton (*Croton texensis*) is an annual forb that is common throughout much of western Texas. It and most other crotons can be toxic to livestock if eaten in large quantities but it is an abundant and important seed producer. Croton seed is highly sought after by quail, dove, and other granivorous birds. Another common name for Texas croton is dove-weed. Crotons respond positively to soil disturbance and habitat enhancement activities such as disking, grazing, and prescribed fire can be used to promote croton.



Silverleaf nightshade (*Solanum elaeagnifolium*) is common throughout much of Texas. Its appearance, when not in flower, can resemble Texas croton aka doveweed. When in bloom, its showy purple flowers easily separate it from doveweed. It too can be toxic to livestock if eaten in large quantities. It is a member of the tomato family and produces a fruit which resembles a small yellow tomato. The fruits will be eaten by a wide variety of wildlife. The seeds are consumed by quail and other granivorous birds. This perennial also responds positively to habitat management activities, especially summer prescribed fire.

